



Worksession

Agenda Item #	5
Meeting Date	September 4, 2007
Prepared By	Suzanne Ludlow,  Community and Government Liaison
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews,  City Manager

Discussion Item	Recommended FY08 County Budget Priorities
Background	<p>Each year, the Montgomery County Council requests public input at the beginning of its budget process. A public hearing on the FY08 Budget Priorities and Performance Measures is scheduled for 7:30 pm on Tuesday, September 11. The Mayor is signed up to testify at the hearing.</p> <p>Subjects that have been included in last year's testimony or that were recommended for this year include: affordable housing; protecting municipal funds during State and County budget processes; money for basic services for ultra-low income county residents; New Hampshire Avenue redevelopment; tax duplication; bridge improvements; the Purple Line; the Takoma Metro; and the pool at Piney Branch Elementary School. Based on the direction from Council, draft testimony will be prepared.</p>
Policy	The City Council pursues legislation in the best interest of the City of Takoma Park.
Fiscal Impact	n/a
Attachments	Letter from Council President Marilyn Praisner
Recommendation	Identify items for inclusion in September 11 public hearing testimony.
Special Consideration	



County Council

Montgomery County, Maryland

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FY09 Montgomery County Budget Priorities Letter

- Release ID: 07-080
- Release Date: 7/27/2007
- Contact: Neil Greenberger 240-777-7939
- From: Council Office

Montgomery County Council

Rockville, Maryland

July 27, 2007

Dear Neighbor:

The annual Montgomery County budget is of real importance to all our residents. The County Council will make final decisions on the budget for the next fiscal year, FY 2009, in May 2008. As we prepare for FY 2009, the Council welcomes the views of all stakeholders in our community about what the County's budget priorities should be.

On February 15, 2005 the Council unanimously adopted Resolution No. 15-904, Establishing Annual Budget Priorities and Performance Measures. The resolution states that "the Council intends to establish a stronger framework for its budget deliberations in close consultation with County agencies and the community. As a key element of this framework, the Council intends to set annual budget priorities. The Council will set these priorities by October 1 each year for the following fiscal year."

On September 26, 2006 the Council unanimously adopted Resolution No. 15-1613, FY08 Operating Budget Priorities and Performance Measures. The priorities we identified then were fully reflected in the FY 2008 operating budget that we approved two months ago. In alphabetical order, those priorities were:

Affordable housing. We increased support for the Housing Initiative Fund and other efforts to address the County's serious affordable housing problem.

Education. We continued our strong commitment to class size reduction and other priorities at MCPS, and we provided greater support for Montgomery College.

Environment. We expanded support for parks maintenance and recycling.

Health and human services. We expanded support for health care for the uninsured and for safety net services for our most vulnerable residents.

Infrastructure maintenance. We made further progress in meeting the needs identified by the Council Task Force on Infrastructure Maintenance.

Public safety. We increased the number of police officers on the street, and we increased the number of firefighters to address issues of overtime and response times.

Tax relief and fairness. We provided a \$613 credit against property taxes for all owner-occupied homes, continued the expanded "circuitbreaker" relief for low and moderate income homeowners, and added a new property tax credit for seniors.

Apart from these priorities in the FY 2008 operating budget, the Council approved a capital budget for FY 2008 that strengthens our construction programs for transportation, MCPS, Montgomery College, public safety, and libraries.

In advance of this year's October 1 deadline, we plan to hold a public hearing on the evening of September 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the Council Office Building in Rockville. The Management and Fiscal Policy will meet on September 24 at 9:30 a.m. to develop recommendations, which the Council will consider on September 25.

Apart from budget priorities, the Council's resolution also requests County agencies – Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, the Park and Planning Commission, and WSSC, as well as County Government itself – to provide performance measures on their programs that enable the Council and the community to determine how effective they have been.

The views of all stakeholders in our community on County budget priorities and performance measures for FY 2009 are important to the Council, and we would welcome your responses to the following questions:

Do you believe that the Council's FY 2008 priorities listed above require additional support in FY 2009? If so, which ones and in what order? Are there specific elements of these priorities that you feel require special focus?

Are there other areas that in your view should have priority in FY 2009? If so, which ones and in what order?

Are there areas that in your view should have lower priority for FY 2009? Do you believe that savings could be achieved? If so, where and how much?

Are there areas where in your view the County could provide services more efficiently? If so, which ones and how?

Do you have any further ideas about how the Council can most effectively undertake the priority-setting process for FY 2009?

To ensure that your responses are part of the Council's priority-setting process in September, please transmit them by September 4 to county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov. We appreciate your participation in this process.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Praisner
Council President

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